

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress  
1st Session

**Vote No. 21**

February 27, 1997, 4:54 pm  
Page S-1721 Temp. Record

## BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT/Only 3 Years to Ratify

**SUBJECT:**      **Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment . . . S. J. Res. 1. Hatch motion to table the Feingold amendment No. 13.**

### ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 69-31

**SYNOPSIS:**      As reported, S. J. Res. 1, the Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment: will require a three-fifths majority vote of both Houses of Congress to deficit spend or to increase the public debt limit; will require the President's annual proposed budget submission to be in balance; and will require a majority of the whole number of each House to approve any bill to increase revenue. Congress will be allowed to waive these requirements for any fiscal year in which a declaration of war is in effect. Congress will enforce and implement this amendment by appropriate legislation. The amendment will take effect in fiscal year 2002 or with the second fiscal year beginning after its ratification, whichever is later. The States will have 7 years to ratify the amendment. For related debate, see 103rd Congress, second session, vote Nos. 47-48, 104th Congress, first session, vote Nos. 62-63 and 65-98, and 104th Congress, second session, vote No. 158.

**The Feingold amendment** would give the States only 3 years to ratify the amendment instead of 7 years.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Hatch moved to table the amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

**Those favoring** the motion to table contended:

The Feingold amendment is a distraction. The Senator from Wisconsin has no intention of voting for the Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment in any event, nor do any of the Senators who support his amendment. If it were not for the Senator from Wisconsin and like-minded Senators, this constitutional amendment would have been passed long ago and the States would have had ample time to ratify it. Our colleague tells us that he thinks that the States should hurry to approve it so it will take effect by 2002,

(See other side)

YEAS (69)			NAYS (31)		NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (55 or 100%)	Democrats (14 or 31%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (31 or 69%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Baucus		Akaka		
Allard	Hutchison	Biden		Bingaman		
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Breaux		Boxer		
Bennett	Jeffords	Bryan		Bumpers		
Bond	Kempthorne	Dorgan		Byrd		
Brownback	Kyl	Graham		Cleland		
Burns	Lott	Harkin		Conrad		
Campbell	Lugar	Hollings		Daschle		
Chafee	Mack	Kohl		Dodd		
Coats	McCain	Landrieu		Durbin		
Cochran	McConnell	Moseley-Braun		Feingold		
Collins	Murkowski	Reid		Feinstein		
Coverdell	Nickles	Robb		Ford		
Craig	Roberts	Wyden		Glenn		
D'Amato	Roth			Inouye		
DeWine	Santorum			Johnson		
Domenici	Sessions					
Enzi	Shelby					
Faircloth	Smith, Bob					
Frist	Smith, Gordon					
Gorton	Snowe					
Gramm	Specter					
Grams	Stevens					
Grassley	Thomas					
Gregg	Thompson					
Hagel	Thurmond					
Hatch	Warner					
Helms						

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

and we believe that they would, but we note that an opponent of ratification might have some slim hope that delaying tactics could be employed in enough States to block implementation. Many State legislatures have very limited legislative sessions; some will not even meet this year. Once this constitutional amendment clears the greatest stumbling block--the Senate--Members will know that they will have to balance the budget, and will almost certainly have to balance it by 2002. Changing the timeframe for ratification will in no way change how the Senate will act. Our colleagues have repeated President Clinton's statement that all we need to do is pass a balanced budget and he will sign it. Why should we believe him? We passed a balanced budget last Congress and he vetoed it, and he did not give the slightest shred of support to alternative proposals that used honest numbers instead of the types of gimmicks he always employs. Those honest alternative proposals were advanced by both Republican and Democratic Members. We do not have the slightest reason to believe that the President will keep his word. Further, we have at the desk this huge stack of unbalanced budgets that have been compiled over recent decades. We have had deficits in every year of the last 28 years, and in 58 of the last 66 years. In almost all of those years Congress thought that it would balance the budget in the current year or within a few years, but when it came time to make the hard choices called for in those budgets it always wilted. How many more failures will our colleagues need to witness before they admit that Congress cannot make the hard choices necessary without a constitutional requirement to be responsible? Ever since Congress started putting time limits on the ratification of constitutional amendments, the standard, almost universally used length of time has been 7 years. We see absolutely no benefit from deviating from that standard, and we are confident that a large majority of our colleagues are of a like mind. We urge Senators to join us in tabling this amendment.

**Those opposing** the motion to table contended:

The Feingold amendment is the fish-or-cut-bait amendment. If Senators really think they need a constitutional requirement to balance the budget by 2002 then they need to pass this amendment. The resolution, as drafted, says that the Balanced Budget Amendment will go into effect in 2002 or two years after the requisite number of States ratify it, whichever is later, and it will give the States 7 years to ratify it. If the States ratify it in three years, then it will go into effect in 2002; if they ratify it in 7 years, it will not go into effect until 2006. Senators talk as though passing the Balanced Budget Amendment is the same as actually balancing the budget, but it is not. As we have stated on many occasions before, we do not favor passing the Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment. To balance the budget, as President Clinton has stated, all Congress has to do is vote for a balanced budget and he will sign it. Courage, not a constitutional amendment, is needed. If we are going to pass a constitutional amendment, though, and if we are going to talk about it going into effect in 2002, then we should make sure that 2002 is really the effective date. The Feingold amendment would accomplish that end, and therefore merits our support.